

Message Text

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PAGE 01 HONG K 06830 181020Z

12

ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 AID-05 EB-07 COME-00 L-03

CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 PM-03 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15

TRSE-00 H-02 DODE-00 OMB-01 /073 W

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P R 180933Z JUN 75

FM AMCONSUL HONG KONG

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5498

INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

C O N F I D E N T I A L HONG KONG 6830

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR HK

SUBJ: THE PRG AND HONG KONG SALES OF FRUSTRATED CARGOES

1. THE HONG KONG GOVERNMENT POLITICAL ADVISER HAS INFORMED THE CONGEN THAT THE HKG RECEIVED JUNE 16 A NOTE FROM HANOI (PRG) TO THE EFFECT THAT ALL THE PROPERTY IN ANY FORM WHICH IS IN HONG KONG WAREHOUSES AND WAS THE PROPERTY OF THE FORMER GOVERNMENT OF VIETNAM IS NOW THE PROPERTY OF THE PRG. ITS DISPOSAL IS THE UNALIENABLE RIGHT OF THE PRG. NOBODY IS TO BE ALLOWED TO LAY HANDS ON IT. THE HKG SHOULD HOLD ON TO IT UNTIL SUCH TIME AS A REPRESENTATIVE OF THE PRG WILL BE SENT TO PAY STORAGE CHARGES AND TAKE POSSESSION.

2. THE POLAD ADDED THAT THE NOTE WAS THE FIRST DIRECT APPROACH FROM THE PRG ON THE ISSUE OF FRUSTRATED CARGOES IN HONG KONG. AS EARLY AS THE BEGINNING OF MAY, THE HKG HAD RECEIVED INFORMAL APPROACHES FROM AN ORGANIZATION PURPORTING TO REPRESENT PRG COMMODITIES INTERESTS, BUT THE HKG HAD TURNED THESE APPROACHES ASIDE ON THE GROUNDS THAT THERE WERE NO CARGOES IN HONG KONG BELONGING TO A VIETNAM GOVERNMENT.

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PAGE 02 HONG K 06830 181020Z

ACCORDING TO THE POLAD, THE HKG WILL SEND THE PRG NOTE TO

LONDON WITH A SUGGESTION THAT THE FOREIGN OFFICE TELL THE PRG THE DIPLOMATIC EQUIVALENT OF "TAKE A RUNNING JUMP AT YOURSELF".

3. THE FIRST PUBLIC SALE OF FRUSTRATED CARGOES WAS HELD IN HONG KONG JUNE 18 AND DETAILS ARE REPORTED SEPTEL. HAD IT NOT BEEN FOR PUBLIC CLAIMS BY THE PRG THAT AID GOODS ORIGINALLY DESTINED FOR SAIGON WRE THE PROPERTY OF THE PRG, PRESS ATTENTION TO THE SALE OF THE 2,004 BALES OF COTTON WOULD HAVE BEEN MODERATE. HOWEVER, THE PRG CLAIM ELEVATED THE STORY TO THE FRONT PAGE OF MANY HONG KONG PAPERS ON JUNE 18 WITH SUCH HEADLINES AS: "US IGNORES SAIGON PROTESTS" AND "USAID DEFENDS RIGHT TO HOLD TODAY'S COTTON SALE". THE SPOKES MAN FOR THE US CONSULATE WAS QUOTED IN ONE PAPER AS DECLINING TO COMMENT ON THE PRG STATEMENT AND NOTING THAT ANY RESPONSE ON THE SUBJECT WOULD HAVE TO COME FROM THE STATE DEPARTMENT IN WASHINGTON. ANOTHER PAPER QUOTED OUR RESIDENT USAID OFFICIAL AS SAYING THAT THE PRG CLAIM TO USAID GOOD NOW IN ASIAN GODOWNS IS UNJUSTIFIED UNDER THE FORMER AGREEMENT BETWEEN USAID AND THE SOUTH VIETNAMESE GOVERNMENT.

4. WE ANTICIPATE SOME CONTINUED PRESS ON THIS SUBJECT NOT ONLY BECAUSE OF THE INTEREST OF HONG KONG MERCHANTS IN USAID GOODS TO BE OFFERED FOR SALE IN THE FUTURE, BUT BECAUSE OF THE POLITICAL NOTE WHICH HAS BEEN INJECTED INTO THE SUBJECT BY THE PG CLAIM. SO FAR, ALL PRESS COMMENT HAS BEEN CONFINED TO THE TWO MAJOR ENGLISH-LANGUAGE NEWS-PAPERS AND THE NON-COMMUNIST CHINESE PRESS. THE LARGEST PRO-PRG PAPER HERE HAS ONLY CARRIED A REUTERS REPORT ON THE PRG PROTEST.

5. TO ANY PRESS INQUIRIES REGARDING OWNERSHIP AND RIGHT TO SELL FRUSTRATED CARGOES, THE CONGEN WILL TAKE THE LINE THAT THESE CARGOES ARE THE PROPERTY OF THE USG, PAID FOR BY AMERICAN TAXPAYERS, AND THEIR DISPOSAL IS A MATTER OF USG CONCERN ONLY.
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Message Attributes

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Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 18 JUN 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
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Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
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Drafter: n/a
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